



PRESS RELEASE

ST. LUKE'S CATARACT & LASER INSTITUTE TO OFFER FREE SERVICES TO AT-RISK VETERANS AT HUDSON STAND DOWN

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The term 'Stand Down' was used in the military, during wartime to remove exhausted combat units requiring time to rest and recover from the battlefields at a place of relative security and safety. Today, Stand Down refers to a grassroots, community-based intervention program designed to offer the nation's estimated 67,000 homeless veterans a reprieve from life on the streets. A Stand Down will be held October 2-4, 2015 at Veterans Memorial Park in Hudson, FL. The event is open to all homeless and at-risk veterans living in Pasco, Pinellas, Hillsborough, and Hernando counties.

Stand Downs are held in cities all over the nation to provide food, clothing, services and referrals to homeless and at-risk veterans at no cost. This event is organized by One Community Now (OCN), a faith-based 501c3 organization with the goal of organizing the community to assist those with unmet or under-met needs. The three-day Stand Down event will offer access to on-site medical, dental, hearing and ophthalmic attention as well as hot meals, clothing, haircuts, showers, legal counsel, government services, and more.

St. Luke's Cataract & Laser Institute is proud to participate in OCN Stand Down this year. St. Luke's is a provider of a full range of ophthalmic care and surgical procedures for: cataracts, retina, cornea, glaucoma, eyelids, and Lasik surgery. In addition, they offer services in hearing, dermatology, skin care and plastic surgery. St. Luke's will be providing vision and hearing screenings as well as information on dermatology services. St. Luke's is always honored to serve veterans, and particularly proud to announce that two of the MDs participating in the event have served in the military.

Brandon Rodriguez, MD and Robert Howard, MD will be available for vision screenings on Friday, October 2 and Saturday, October 3. Dr. Rodriguez was commissioned as an officer in the U.S. Navy and volunteered to go with a U.S. Marine Corps infantry battalion overseas for two deployments, including Afghanistan after 9/11. Upon returning home, he completed five years of active duty military service.

Dr. Robert Howard was in the U.S. Army for eight years, most recently as the Chief of Ophthalmology at Fort Meade in Maryland. He is a seasoned surgeon, having performed more than 3,000 refractive surgeries on troops deploying to desert zones.

St. Luke's Audiologist Kristen Decelles, MD will be providing hearing screenings and dermatology representatives will also be available with information and advice on wounds and skin conditions.

"We expect over 400 veterans to attend the annual Stand Down. These events present unique opportunities to promote health, wellness and links to valuable VA and community resources for this vulnerable veteran population. Many veterans are only one paycheck away from being homeless," said Lisa Heeter, Neighborhood Impact Director at One Community Now.

The event is made possible by donations of goods, time, services as well as sponsorships. Visit www.onecommunitynow.com to learn more about the OCN Stand Down. Visit www.stlukeseye.com for more information on St. Luke's Cataract & Laser Institute.

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